

## Community resources

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## Viewing cable 09MANAGUA554, CIVIL SOCIETY CALLS FOR ELECTORAL REFORM,

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09MANAGUA554**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">09MANAGUA554</a>	<a href="#">2009-06-03 22:10</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">CONFIDENTIAL</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Managua</a>

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758456.aspx>  
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<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2757239.aspx>  
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<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3967/barreto-era-ldquo-fuente-confiable-rdquo-para-eeuu>

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RHBVJPX/COMPHIBRON SIX PRIORITY  
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RHBPCOM/MEDTRE FAC COMFORT PRIORITY  
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RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MANAGUA 000554

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SUBJECT: CIVIL SOCIETY CALLS FOR ELECTORAL REFORM,  
GOVERNMENT CONTINUES INTRANSIGENCE

REF: MANAGUA 203

Classified By: Ambassador Robert J. Callahan, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Nearly seven months after Nicaragua's fraudulent municipal elections, civil society continues to call on the Government of Nicaragua (GON) to address the fraud and restore people's confidence in the country's electoral system. On May 28, over 100 civil society associations held a conference to publicly announce their proposal for electoral reform as a "way out of the country's political crisis." On June 1, the local NGO Movimiento por Nicaragua (MpN) sponsored a forum to denounce the election fraud and subsequent violence. These are but two of civil society's latest efforts to pressure the government to respond to the electoral fraud. Unfortunately, the Ortega government holds tight to its intransigent position. End Summary.

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Civil Society Proposes Electoral Reform  
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¶2. (SBU) On May 28, the Group for the Promotion of Electoral Reform (GPRE) held a conference to publicly roll-out and invite other organizations to sign the proposal for electoral reform. (The GPRE comprises 15 civil society groups and is led by Nicaragua's two most prominent election observation groups - IPADE and Etica y Transparencia, EyT. The group receives assistance through USAID.) The proposal states that the citizens "have lost confidence in the electoral authorities and are being affected by the suspension of foreign assistance" and that "six months have passed since the elections and no national authority figure has begun a dialogue with the citizenry to address the political crisis" brought about by the electoral fraud. As a result, the proposal calls for the resignation of all Supreme Electoral Council magistrates and new magistrates to work toward providing transparency and legitimacy to the November 2008 municipal elections. The proposal also calls for electoral reform that provides more independence to the electoral council, greater inclusion of political parties and citizens' groups in the electoral process, and greater transparency in the electoral results.

¶3. (SBU) At the conference members of the GPRE and other civil society organizations publicly stated their support for the proposal, called for government officials to address the

citizenry's concern, and publicly signed the document. Groups signing the document included national-level NGOs, but also NGOs working solely in certain departments or municipalities. There were two representatives from organizations from the departments of Leon and Chinandega, who represented over 15 civil society groups. In their public statements, these representatives stated that their departments were being directly affected by the suspension of the Millennium Challenge Account, but believed the Ortega government was not interested in helping these people as it was not resolving the problem in order to maintain the assistance. Other organizations signing the proposal included the Association of Nicaraguan Journalists, the United Teachers Union, National Coordinator for Transport, and the National Council of Evangelical Pastors.

¶4. (SBU) Realizing the fear by some in Nicaraguan society that promoting electoral reform could lead to broader constitutional reform that benefits the ruling Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) (reftel), Zuniga stated that the proposal is aimed at addressing the fraud and restoring people's confidence in the electoral system. The proposal, he added, is not meant as a "stepping stone toward broader constitutional reform."

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Civil Society Continues to Denounce Fraud  
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¶5. (SBU) On June 1 civil society continued to publicly denounce Nicaragua's fraudulent November 2008 municipal

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elections. Movimiento por Nicaragua (MpN) held a forum in Managua, which gathered representatives of the media, NGOs and electoral observers, and opposition mayoral candidates believed to have won in their municipalities. The consensus was clear across the board that a large number of municipal elections were characterized by fraud. Specific examples of the fraud included 38% of polling booths being closed early, clear partisan actions in favor of the FSLN on the part of the electoral police (images were displayed of some brandishing nightsticks in an attempt to intimidate the opposition), and an inconsistent voter registration process that favored the governing FSLN.

¶6. (SBU) The opposition mayoral candidates that made presentations at the forum represented the municipalities of Leon, Masaya, Corinto, Juigalpa, and Managua. Each described the particularities of the fraud in his municipality, including some (like Corinto and Juigalpa) which the electoral authorities initially had declared winners. Since the elections, these candidates have formed an association (the November 9 Group) and have continued to publicly denounce the election fraud and promoted transparency in local governments.

¶7. (SBU) The various groups at the MpN forum described how the election fraud has negatively impacted the Nicaraguans' faith in the democratic process, noting many citizens would prefer to abstain in future elections. MpN representatives noted this feeling of disenfranchisement among the citizens is dangerous for Nicaragua's democracy, and as such MpN and other NGOs remain committed to organizing the Nicaraguan people to peacefully demonstrate their concern.

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Comment  
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¶8. (C) As Nicaraguan civil society noted, nearly seven months have passed since the fraudulent November 2008 municipal elections and the Ortega government has shown no willingness to address the fraud nor the resulting "political crisis." Rather, Ortega continues to defy national and international calls to resolve the issue, and he claims that

Venezuelan assistance will fill the gap left by traditional donors who pull their assistance as a result of the elections. While civil society continues (and will continue) to denounce the fraud and work to keep the citizens involved in the democratic process, no one believes the Ortega administration will be a partner in this endeavor.

CALLAHAN